



MARINE CORPS CENTER FOR LESSONS LEARNED



COVER STORY:
**Regimental Combat Team Operations in Afghanistan:
Lessons from Regimental Combat Team 5**

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INSIDE THIS ISSUE

MCCLL REPORTS:

3 A Regimental Combat Team's Operations in Afghanistan

This MCCLL report documents the results of a recent Regimental Combat Team 5 (RCT-5) lessons learned conference, co-hosted by the Marine Corps Tactics and Operations Group (MCTOG) and MCCLL.

5 Trends Identified During Recent Aviation Combat Element Operations

This report identifies trends associated with aviation combat element (ACE) operations that have been captured in recent MCCLL reports and unit after action reports (AARs).

FEATURED ARTICLES AND LESSONS:

6 Lessons from a Regimental Combat Team Gunner

A post-deployment after action report (AAR) from the RCT-6 Gunner provides lessons and observations based on the RCT's ten-month deployment.

7 Mitigating the Afghan National Security Forces' (ANSF) "Insider Threat"

A video, prepared jointly by the Asymmetric Warfare Group (AWG), the Center for Army Lessons Learned (CALL), the Training and Doctrine Command (TRADOC) Culture Center, and the TRADOC Intelligence Support Activity (TRISA) provides four case studies of recent real-world "green-on-blue" attacks.

8 Afghan Soldiers Seek to Understand the Cultures of Coalition Forces

There are many source documents that attempt to explain Afghan culture. This training resource from the Afghan National Army (ANA) seeks to explain the culture of coalition forces to ANA soldiers.

9 Dismounted Operations in an IED Environment

A smart book from the Joint IED Defeat Organization (JIEDDO) provides numerous best practices for dismounted patrols that must operate in the presence of IEDs.

10 Marine Corps Efforts to Preserve the Force

In addition to summarizing mishaps sustained by Marines during the month of November, the latest Safety Gram from the Commandant of the Marine Corps (CMC) Safety Division highlights the Marine Corps Force Preservation Program.

11 Ten Years After 9/11: The Remaining Threat from Al-Qaida

This report consolidates the proceedings of a Marine Corps University-sponsored conference on the enduring capabilities of Al-Qaida.

REGULAR FEATURES:

12 The Most Popular Downloads from the MCCLL Website

Documents in the MCCLL repositories that have been accessed most often tend to highlight topics that Marines and other readers find of particular interest.

13 Briefly

Three short articles are highlighted this month:

- A update to the **Multi-Service Tactics, Techniques and Procedures for the Joint Application of Firepower** from the Air Land Sea Application (ALSA) Center,
- Four reports from the Civil-Military Fusion Centre (CFC) that address various sources of **potential instability on the African continent**, and
- A paper from the Defence Academy of the United Kingdom that addresses the **effectiveness of U.S. military information operations campaigns in Afghanistan**.

15 Reading Lists and Book Reviews

Two books on the Commandant's Professional Reading List are featured this month, along with a recent book on recent counter-terrorism campaigns that have targeted Al-Qaida:

- **The Killer Angels** by Michael Shaara,
- **Brute: The Life of Victor Krulak, U.S. Marine** by Robert Coram, and
- **Find, Fix, Finish** by Aki Peritz and Eric Rosenbach.

18 MCCLL Products "in the Pipeline"

Several recent, ongoing and planned MCCLL collections are scheduled to result in the publication of MCCLL reports in coming months.

19 Contact Information for MCCLL Program Analysts

This roster provides contact information for MCCLL representatives assigned at major commands.

Front Cover photo credit: Cpl Reece Lodder

During a patrol with the Afghan National Police (ANP) conducted in support of Operation ZEMA PARMA SAR TERA (Don't Tread on Me) in the Garmsir District of southern Helmand Province, a Marine squad leader and a rifleman from 3d Battalion, 3d Marines (3/3), RCT-5, climb onto the roof of a compound.

MCCLL REPORTS:

A Regimental Combat Team's Operations in Afghanistan

LESSONS FROM THE REGIMENTAL COMBAT TEAM 5 CONFERENCE

In September 2012, the fifth in a series of regimental combat team (RCT) lessons learned conferences sponsored by the Marine Corps Tactics and Operations Group (MCTOG) (and the third co-hosted by the Marine Corps Center for Lessons Learned (MCCLL)) was held at Camp Pendleton to document lessons and observations from the year-long deployment of RCT-5. From August 2011 to August 2012, RCT-5 provided the command element for Marine Corps and coalition ground forces operating across a diverse geographical area that spanned the central and southern portions of Helmand Province in southwestern Afghanistan. During this deployment (as noted by the RCT-5 Commander), *"The most important function of the RCT headquarters was to provide continuity of effort and consistency across the battlespace."*

The RCT's operations took place during a period of significant transition as the Afghan National Security Forces (ANSF) increasingly assumed lead authority in key districts that had, at one time, been major strongholds of the insurgency. Although the RCT emphasized each of the key lines of operation (security, ANSF development, reconstruction/development, and governance), during the latter part of its deployment, ANSF development became the primary area of focus. The RCT's mission transitioned from partnered counterinsurgency operations to one of security force assistance (SFA). The RCT coordinated numerous regimental and battalion-level operations to achieve its objectives, with the campaign designed to result in either the closure of most RCT positions or their transfer to the ANSF. To the maximum extent possible, the RCT supported independent operations by the ANSF in an effort to build the confidence of these forces.

A cultural paradigm shift was required by Marine commanders and advisors in order to help achieve the necessary ANSF independence. In an effort to determine when and how much assistance to provide to the ANSF, frequent and regular combined operational planning team (OPT) meetings were held with representatives of the relevant ANSF units, the battlespace owners, and the security force assistance - advisor teams (SFA-AT). Objectives and responsibilities were synchronized during these sessions, along with efforts to manage expectations.



Video credit: Cpl Reece Lodder

Marines from 3d Battalion, 3d Marines (3/3), RCT-5, and Afghan National Army (ANA) soldiers from the 2nd Kandak, 1st Brigade, 215th Corps, plan Operation TAGEER SHAMAL (Shifting Winds) to be conducted in the periphery of the Garmsir District. The video can be accessed from the [Defense Video and Imagery Distribution System \(DVIDS\)](#).

Upon the RCT's re-deployment, the MCTOG/MCCLL lessons learned conference was scheduled to examine the mission, scope, successes, shortfalls, equipment, manning, and emerging issues associated with RCT-5's operations. The key points made during the conference have been documented in a MCCLL Unclassified/For Official Use Only (FOUO) report, entitled [RCT-5 in OEF: Report of the September 2012 MCCLL/MCTOG Co-Hosted Lessons Learned Conference](#). The [MCTOG Executive Summary](#) on the conference also contains a number of systemic trends identified during this and previous RCT conferences, while the [RCT-5 Post-Deployment After Action Report](#) provides additional and amplifying information on the RCT's deployment. Selected observations from the MCCLL conference report, which are releasable in this newsletter, include:

- **Pre-Deployment Training Program (PTP).** During PTP, it is recommended that the RCT staff participate in video

teleconferences with their in-country counterparts to build situational awareness.

- To the extent possible, all PTP training venues should replicate current conditions in theater and the associated tactics, techniques and procedures (TTPs).
- Ideally, during the course of PTP, training should transition from basic fundamentals (in such areas as counter-IED training, for example) to more detailed and advanced training.
- PTP should incorporate the same equipment that units will be required to employ in theater.
- Advisor team leaders should conduct a pre-deployment site survey (PDSS) to "look over the shoulder" of the team they will be replacing. The two units should also conduct video teleconferences or schedule other venues for exchanging current information.
- Advisor training should focus on how the staff should function from an Afghan perspective and how to influence their counterparts' development most effectively; language and culture topics should be emphasized.
- **Operations.** The RCT leveraged joint and coalition resources to the greatest extent possible. Leaders throughout the chain of command should be educated concerning these available assets and means for requesting support.
 - One of the greatest manpower needs during the deployment was trained personnel to support the extensive communications architecture required over the vast geographical area of operations.
 - The female engagement teams (FETs) were important assets that were able to obtain valuable information from local national males as well as females. These teams should be fully exploited to obtain actionable information on the human terrain.
 - In scheduling key leader engagements, it is important to ensure that they are managed equitably. The attention and presence of coalition force leaders with Afghan leaders was considered to be prestigious in the local culture. A major focus of these engagements should be on Government of the Islamic Republic of Afghanistan (GIROA) officials within the district centers.
- **ANSF Partnering and Advising.** In order to ensure a common understanding of guidance, orders, and policies affecting the ANSF units, they should be promulgated simultaneously through the SFA-AT, ANSF, and coalition chains of command.



Photo credit: LCpl Cesar N. Contreras

Marines from the Police Advisory Team (PAT), 3d Battalion, 8th Marines (3/8), RCT-5, together with police from the Afghan Uniformed Police (AUP), observe a suspected enemy position during a routine patrol in the Marjah District of central Helmand Province.

- The RCT recommends the maintenance of relationships and daily interaction with the ANSF as the most effective means of recognizing when situations "felt off" and there might be the potential for an insider threat.
- As the drawdown proceeds, there will be fewer opportunities for daily interaction with the ANSF, so advisors should make a concerted effort to include their counterparts on visits and battlefield circulation activities.
- The Afghan culture requires that advisors have enough seniority to be credible. The personality of potential advisors is also very important, as is their willingness to work closely with their Afghan counterparts.
- **Logistics.** The widely dispersed environment of the RCT AO created many challenges in maintaining proper accountability practices and procedures. This was complicated by the need to simultaneously oversee retrograde and redeployment (R2) activities.
 - The management of theater-provided equipment also proved to be a significant challenge.
 - The RCT-5 Commander emphasized that maintaining an "accountability mindset" was a priority, including the employment of checklists and commander-to-commander outbriefs during battalion turnovers.

Trends Identified During Recent Aviation Combat Element Operations

LESSONS FROM MCCLL REPORTS AND UNIT AFTER ACTION REPORTS

In July 2012, MCCLL began publishing the second in a series of periodic reports that compile trends documented during the process of capturing lessons from recent in-theater deployments, exercises and training evolutions. Each of these individual reports address one of the four Marine Air Ground Task Force (MAGTF) elements: command element (CE), ground combat element (GCE), aviation combat element (ACE), or logistics combat element (LCE). The objective is to provide these observations to those Marine Corps decision makers and leaders who are best positioned to address the issues. The first of this second series, the [LCE Trends Report for 1 January to 31 July 2012](#), was published in September, while the second, [Command Element Trends for 1 April to 30 September 2012](#), was published in December. The third report, [Aviation Combat Element Trends for 1 March to 30 September 2012](#), is now available and addresses aviation-related trends in the following areas:

Current Trends:

- **Command and Control (C2) of Marine Expeditionary Brigade (MEB) ACE Operations Afloat.** The experiences gained during recent amphibious exercises (including [SSANG YONG](#), [BOLD ALLIGATOR](#), and [RIMPAC](#), each of which has been documented in a MCCLL report) point out

Photo credit: LCpl James Sauter

A CH-53E Super Stallion takes off from the flight deck of the USS Essex (LHD 2) during a helicopter beach assault rehearsal on Pyramid Rock during Exercise RIM OF THE PACIFIC (RIMPAC) 2012. The helicopter assault was an opportunity for multilateral units to operate together in a combined training environment.



Photo credit: Cpl Michael Petersheim

A CH-53E Super Stallion from Marine Medium Tiltrotor Squadron 261 (Rein) (VMM-261 (Rein)) provides support for reconnaissance Marines from the Maritime Raid Force, 24th Marine Expeditionary Unit, along with Jordanian Marines, who are practicing fast-rope techniques during Exercise EAGER LION 2012.

the need for the Marine Corps and Navy to work together to address a number of C2 issues.

- **Fast Rope Operations and Training.** Additional fully-equipped aircraft will allow fast-rope training requirements to be fully incorporated into the pre-deployment training of Marine forces, such as Marine Expeditionary Units (MEUs), and during subsequent operations.

Trends Update:

- **Training on Unmanned Aircraft Systems (UAS).** As the requirement for overseas combat deployments of UAS is reduced, the availability of these assets for CONUS training will increase. This availability should be fully exploited.
- **MV-22B "Osprey" Operations and Training.** With plans for the integration of the MV-22B into ACE operations continuing to evolve, greater advantage can be taken of the unique capabilities of this aircraft during training.
- **KC-130J "Harvest Hawk" in Operation Enduring Freedom (OEF).** As the Harvest Hawk mission also continues to be developed, new capabilities and training options will be defined, with support requirements expected to increase accordingly. Many lessons and observations concerning training and operations of the Harvest Hawk are identified in the recent [MCCLL report](#) on this topic.
- **Digital Aviation Tablet Cockpit Tool.** As pointed out in many squadron AARs, the use of tablet computers as "electronic flight bags" for storing paper maps and other source documents has significantly reduced the need for multiple paper products aboard aircraft.

FEATURED ARTICLES AND LESSONS:

Lessons from a Regimental Combat Team Gunner

POST-DEPLOYMENT AFTER ACTION REPORT FROM THE REGIMENTAL COMBAT TEAM 6 GUNNER

A [Regimental Combat Team 6 \(RCT-6\) After Action Report \(AAR\)](#) in storyboard format from the RCT-6 Gunner completes a trilogy of AARs in this format that have been prepared by the Gunner. The previous two were a [3d Battalion, 9th Marines \(3/9\) AAR](#) and an [RCT-6 First 100 Days AAR](#), both of which have proven to be popular as classroom resources in preparation for unit Afghanistan deployments. This final AAR is based on the RCT's deployment from January through October 2012 as the command element for ground forces operating in northern Helmand Province during a period in which the RCT focused on offensive disruption operations in known enemy strongholds, as well as the transition of the Afghan National Security Forces (ANSF) to lead security authority in many locations in the Regional Command Southwest (RC (SW)) area of operations.

The RCT-6 Gunner emphasizes weapons employment best practices, as well as defensive capabilities, including counter-IED activities and the defense of forward operating bases (FOBs) and patrol bases. Units that have proven to be best at countering the IED threat "learn every day" and pass identified best practices down to the lowest ranks. The Gunner points out that, if a situation encountered on a patrol "feels wrong, then it is wrong." Marines should also be familiar with the capabilities and limitations of all equipment that has been furnished to them for defeating the IED.

The AAR points out that tactics employed in this operational environment were driven by: (1) the presence of IEDs, (2) theater-provided equipment (TPE), (3) fires restrictions, (4) intelligence collection assets, (5) the tactics and behaviors of the enemy, and (6) current weapons capabilities and limitations. Preparation of



Photo credit: Pfc Jason Morrison

A dog handler attached to Bravo Company, 1st Battalion, 7th Marines (1/7), RCT-6, patrols with his combat tracking dog out of an Afghan Uniformed Police (AUP) compound in the Sangin District of northern Helmand Province.

individual Marines for combat is key, along with ensuring that they are ambassadors that exemplify "honor, courage, and commitment."

The Gunner points out that many of the best practices identified by the RCT's battalions have been captured in unit AARs, including those of 2d Battalion, 4th Marines (2/4) and 3d Battalion, 7th Marines (3/7), both of which are available on the MCCLL SIPR website at: <https://www.mccll.usmc.smil.mil>. These AARs should be required reading for Afghanistan deployments.

Photo credit: Cpl Ed Galo

Marines from Charlie Company, 1st Battalion, 7th Marines (1/7), RCT-6, assemble at their forward operating base in the Sangin District of northern Helmand Province prior to beginning a major operation across the district.



Mitigating the Afghan National Security Forces' 'Insider Threat'

A TRAINING VIDEO FOR U.S. FORCES

The number of "insider" attacks against U.S. military forces, other coalition forces, and other U.S. interests in Afghanistan has steadily risen during the past few years, with the most significant increase occurring between 2011 and 2012. The potential for insider attacks (also commonly referred to as "green-on-blue" attacks) is expected to remain and will likely constitute a threat to U.S. military forces throughout their transition from a combat to a security force assistance role; Marines will continue to work closely with the Afghan National Security Forces (ANSF) on a daily basis in an advising and mentoring capacity.

Among the available training resources that identify best practices for helping to mitigate the insider threat is a recent training video, prepared jointly by the Asymmetric Warfare Group (AWG), the Center for Army Lessons Learned (CALL), the Training and Doctrine Command (TRADOC) Culture Center, and the TRADOC Intelligence Support Activity (TRISA), entitled *Insider Threats in Afghanistan*, which is available on the [MCCLL home page](#). In this video, the insider threat is defined to be "assaults by Afghan National Army (ANA) soldiers, Afghan National Police (ANP) officers, or others perceived to be part of the ANSF, against International Security Assistance Force (ISAF) or United Nations Assistance Mission in Afghanistan (UNAMA) personnel."

In general, the insider attacks have fallen into one of four categories: (1) attacks based on personal grievances, in which

*The **Insider Threats in Afghanistan** training video on the [MCCLL home page](#) provides background information on the "green-on-blue" threat in Afghanistan, along with four specific examples of real-world incidents (all of which occurred in 2012) that furnish numerous lessons and best practices for mitigating the threat.*



Photo credit: SSgt Raul Gonzalez

A member of the Musa Qa'leh Police Advisor Team, Regimental Combat Team 6 (RCT-6), employs hand-held interagency identity detection equipment (HIIDE) to record the biometrics of an Afghan Local Police (ALP) trainee at the Musa Qa'leh District Center in northern Helmand Province. Marines use the HIIDE to enter biometrics and other information on the trainees into the database, with one of the primary purposes being to help mitigate the insider threat.

disagreements between ANSF and ISAF personnel, actual or perceived personal affronts, or frustrations on the part of an ANSF member have led to assaults, (2) co-option, in which insurgents have convinced ANSF personnel (often through coercion or threats) to conduct attacks, (3) impersonation, in which insurgents have appeared to be ANSF personnel by wearing their uniforms or other means, and (4) infiltration, in which insurgents have joined the ANSF either to conduct an immediate attack or become part of a "sleeper" cell that obtains intelligence on ANSF and ISAF operations and/or waits for the opportunity to conduct an attack at a later date. The video points out that the majority of insider attacks have been traced to personal grievances as the most likely cause, although co-option appears to be an escalating threat. The video includes four case studies of real-world incidents that took place in 2012 and serve to highlight numerous best practices for helping to mitigate this threat, as well as serving as the basis for discussion.

Readers may also be interested in other resources that provide lessons and observations for mitigating this threat, including a CALL handbook, entitled [Inside the Wire Threats in Afghanistan: Green-on-Blue](#), a companion [Inside the Wire, Green-on-Blue Smart Card](#), another CALL smart card that focuses on the [Linguist "Inside the Wire Threat,"](#) and an AWG smart card on [Insider Threats in Partnering Environments](#). All of these sources identify key risk factors associated with the insider threat, observable indicators of potential threats, and recommended preventive actions.

Afghan Soldiers Seek to Understand the Culture of Coalition Forces

A GUIDE PREPARED BY THE AFGHAN NATIONAL ARMY'S RELIGIOUS AND CULTURAL AFFAIRS DEPARTMENT

The need for U.S. military forces to develop a greater understanding of key cultural and religious factors that can influence the degree to which they interact effectively with the Afghan local populace, as well as the Afghan National Security Forces (ANSF), has been strongly emphasized in pre-deployment training programs for many years. Many training resources have been produced to support development of this understanding.

But what about the need for the ANSF to develop a degree of understanding concerning the cultures of U.S. forces and other coalition partners who they must work with on a daily basis? In recognition of the requirement for there to be a level of appreciation for other cultures by all military forces conducting combined operations in Afghanistan, the Religious and Cultural

“... We should understand that many of the members of ISAF are just as religious as Afghans, but it is important to understand that the role of religion is different in most of the ISAF states. The difference is often found in the role religion plays in governing or influencing society.

In Afghanistan, religion is a large part of public life. This means that religion has an important role in the economic, social, and political aspects of Afghan society. Religion is part of the national identity of Afghans; it defines in part who Afghans are as a people. This is not necessarily true among many ISAF states. Religion may be part of an individual's personal life, but may not be part of his or her public life and probably does not determine how the state is organized or functions. . . Most Afghans cannot conceive of a government in which Islam does not have a major role to play. Most ISAF states cannot conceive of a government that does not limit the influence of religion in state affairs. . . Who you believe in, how you believe . . . is not governed by the state, but is seen as an important matter between you, those closest to you, and the religion you choose to practice. . .”

From "A Guide for Understanding Coalition Cultures"



*Photo credit: Cpl Mark Garcia
More than 300 Muslims from the militaries of various countries (including Jordan, Bahrain, Bosnia, the United Kingdom, and the U.S.) participate in a service at Camp Leatherneck to celebrate Eid al-Fitar, which marks the end of the holy month of Ramadan.*

Affairs Department of the Afghan National Army (ANA) has developed a [Guide for Understanding Coalition Cultures](#) (English language translation) that is designed to be used to acquaint Afghan soldiers with coalition customs and help foster mutual understanding. Developed as a result of direction by the Chief of the General Staff of the ANA, the document is designed to serve as a resource for officers in every ANA *tolai* (company-level unit) who are tasked with training their soldiers.

In particular, the guide provides a comparison of the Fundamental Rights and Duties of Afghan Citizens as defined in the Constitution of Afghanistan with similar statements in the United Nations' Universal Declaration of Human Rights; many similarities are evident in these two documents. The guide also provides a similar comparison between statements of ANA values with those of the U.S. Army. As would be expected, there are more similarities than differences between the two, especially in the areas of honor, duty, respect, integrity, and personal courage.

Dismounted Operations in an IED Environment

A SMART BOOK FROM THE JOINT IED DEFEAT ORGANIZATION

Although the improvised explosive device (IED) threat is generally associated with military operations in Iraq and Afghanistan, this threat has migrated across the globe and will likely be faced by military forces for many years to come. As a result, even though most of the existing resources have been developed to focus on best practices for operations in specific environments encountered during these recent conflicts, many of the concepts will likely have application for the future as well. A recent resource that provides best practices that apply specifically to patrols that are conducted by dismounted military forces is a [Counter-IED Smart Book](#) from the Joint IED Defeat Organization (JIEDDO). Since dismounted patrols have natural advantages, including increased freedom of movement without being restricted by terrain, these type of patrols are often necessary, even in an IED environment.

The Smart Book points out that a clear understanding of these best practices (including employment of all available counter-IED resources and continual awareness of relevant ground signs) are considered to be key elements in successfully countering the threat. Essentially, units that conduct dismounted operations need to focus on making sure that the targeting process of the enemy is as challenging as possible. Understanding what constitutes a "vulnerable point" or "vulnerable area" will assist in developing a threat assessment prior to a dismounted operation, as well as during the operation itself. Taking these locations into account, along with understanding the local atmospheric, will assist in making appropriate tactical decisions and enhance the freedom of movement of units across the battlefield.

The individual sections of the Smart Book address the following topics:

- **Dismounted Procedures**, including common-sense best practices and tactics, techniques and procedures (TTPs) for preparing for and conducting dismounted patrols.
- **Planning for a Dismounted Patrol** that outlines the specific steps to follow in the planning process, as well as documenting steps to take when IEDs are encountered during a patrol.
- **Dismounted Equipment**, providing best practices for employing specific tools and resources that have been developed to assist in countering the IED threat. The capabilities and limitations of these resources are specified.

In addition to this Smart Book, there are many other source documents available that provide best practices and TTPs for



Photo credit: Sgt Michele Watson

An explosive ordnance disposal (EOD) technician with an EOD company of 1st Marine Logistics Group (MLG) (Forward) instructs a Marine on the proper utilization of the "sickle" during a counter-IED course at Camp Leatherneck. The course is designed to prepare Marines for conducting successful dismounted operations in an IED environment.

successful operations in an IED environment. Many of these resources have been compiled on the [JIEDDO Knowledge and Information Fusion Exchange \(JKNIFE\) website](#). This site is designed to be a one-stop-shop for unclassified/For Official Use Only (FOUO) information that can be used to support counter-IED training requirements. JKNIFE also maintains a SIPR website that includes classified resources that serve the same function.

“ . . . A dismounted operation enhances your interaction with the local populace and enables you to gain intelligence on your area of operations (AO) with tactical questioning (T/Q). . . This smart book demonstrates successful best practices used to support dismounted operations in a tactical environment. . . The key to the success of dismounted operations is a thorough threat assessment of your area of operations. If you think like an insurgent when conducting dismounted patrols, it will aid you in making critical decisions when moving across the battlefield. For a threat to be viable, there must be intent, capability and a suitable location, in terms of time and space, for an offensive action to take place. . . The ability to patrol dismounted requires a significant amount of planning. The rehearsal of individual and collective tasks contributes to a successful dismounted patrol. . .

From the JIEDDO Dismounted C-IED Smart Book

Marine Corps Efforts to Preserve the Force

THE NOVEMBER 2012 SAFETY GRAM FROM THE CMC SAFETY DIVISION

Recent **Safety Grams** and **Did You Know** special safety reports from the Commandant of the Marine Corps (CMC) Safety Division, as well as many other safety-related publications from the Naval Safety Center and deployed commands and units, are available on the [MCCLL website](#) for use by Marines during safety stand-downs and safety briefings. The recently published **November 2012 Safety Gram**, as well as providing an overview of the mishaps sustained by Marines during the month, addresses the Marine Corps Force Preservation Program, which calls on leaders at every level to make preservation of the force the highest priority. The mishaps reported during November highlight the need for a continuing focus on motorcycle safety, since two Marines died during single vehicle motorcycle accidents. One occurred when a Marine hit debris in the road, while another took place when a Marine failed to negotiate a turn (and was not wearing a DOT approved helmet). The Safety Gram also identifies six aviation mishaps in November that resulted in significant damages to aircraft and/or injuries to personnel.

The Safety Gram outlines the key elements of the Marine Corps Force Preservation Program, which include:

- **Assignment of a trained/qualified officer** who needs to have direct access to the commanding officer and executive officer.
- **Establishment of a Force Preservation Council** that meets monthly to identify at-risk Marines.

Photo credit: LCpl Sarah Wolff

A Marine and a Navy veteran use the motorcycle traffic simulators during the grand opening of the 1st Marine Division Motorcycle Club in the 33 Area, hosted by the Semper Ride Motorcycle Safety Campaign.



Photo credit: Sgt Lauren Henson

During the 101 Days of Summer safety stand-down at Marine Corps Air Station, Miramar, Marines from 3d Marine Aircraft Wing (MAW) units participate in a pit crew challenge.

- **Establishment of an NCO Safety Council.**
- The employment of leaders in a **command mentorship program** who audit and view the Marines under their charge.
- **Establishment of safety reporting mechanisms** to ensure that trends are identified.
- **Conduct safety stand-downs** (not only prior to 72 and 96-hour liberties) that address such important issues as suicide prevention and domestic violence awareness in addition to standard safety concerns.
- Work with the installation safety office to develop **force protection and education programs**.
- **Create new-join briefs** for newly arriving personnel.
- Use the CMC Safety Division's **Ground Climate Assessment Survey System (GCASS)** to **assess the effectiveness of the Force Preservation Program**.

In addition to the GCASS, the Safety Gram points out other resources available for safety and force protection, including the **Travel Risk Planning Services (TRIPS)**, the Arrive Alive Card Program, using the NCO Leave and Liberty Policy to cancel or suspend liberty privileges for those Marines deemed to be liberty risks, the Motorcycle Club and Mentorship Program, the information posted on the MCCLL website and in MCCLL newsletters, the use of mishap reporting as a mishap prevention measure, and the distribution of force preservation training materials. Although there is no simple or single solution for Force Preservation, engaged leadership is considered to be essential in gaining a complete picture of the specific situations faced by at-risk Marines.

Ten Years After 9/11: The Remaining Threat from Al-Qaida

PROCEEDINGS FROM A MARINE CORPS UNIVERSITY
CONFERENCE ON "AL-QAIDA AFTER TEN YEARS OF WAR"

Only days before the death of Usama Bin Ladin at the hands of U.S. Special Operations Forces in May 2012, the Minerva Initiative of Marine Corps University (MCU) held a conference, entitled *Al-Qaida After Ten Years of War: A Global Perspective of Successes, Failures, and Prospects*, that sought to develop a greater understanding of the multidimensional aspects of the Al-Qaida threat. Although Al-Qaida is often associated with the insurgency in Afghanistan and nearby Pakistan, the network and its affiliates have operated in various theaters for the past ten years and remain a viable, although "wounded" threat. The MCU conference included a broad spectrum of leading authorities on Al-Qaida from the U.S. and many of the regions that harbor Al-Qaida members or affiliated terrorists. The intent was to bring into focus the objectives, strategy, and policy of the organization over the past decade and provide guideposts for future activity by employing a comparative regional approach that benefits from the expertise of participants in each geographic/cultural theater.

The proceedings of this conference have been compiled in an MCU document, entitled [Al-Qaida After Ten Years of War](#). Although the texts of the original presentations are included as they were originally given, the presenters were afforded the opportunity to add postscripts that address the impact of Bin Ladin's death. In summary, some of the key judgements from the conference are: (1) Al-Qaida continues to harbor implacable hostility toward the international system, the U.S., Israel, and many local governments, (2) central Al-Qaida leadership operates according to concrete long-range plans, although the effectiveness of such plans is often undermined by flawed assumptions and an inability to implement them on the ground, (3) the nature of the relationship between the central Al-Qaida leadership and individual regional branches, affiliates, and allies varies considerably in terms of levels of ideological and financial dependence, command and control architecture, and unit of purpose, (4) Al-Qaida's response to the Arab Spring has been unsure and ineffective, (5) local grievances and issues are likely to favor the continuation of the existence of groups adhering to or cooperating with Al-Qaida, (6) although considerably weakened over the past decade by successful countermeasures by the U.S. and regional states, the organization remains a threat that is far from negligible, (7) Al-Qaida strikes will likely be small, diffuse, and hard to detect, rather than large



Video credit: SSgt Ashely Sitthideth

Soldiers from the Ugandan People's Defense Force (UPDF) practice their tactical skills after receiving training from the Marines of Operational Security Team One. In addition to fighting the Lord's Resistance Army in their own country, the UPDF is providing the majority of forces for the African Union Mission in Somalia, which is fighting the al-Shabaab insurgency. This terrorist organization announced a formal merger with the Al-Qaida network in February 2012. The video is available from the [Defense Video and Imagery Distribution System \(DVIDS\)](#).

9/11-style attacks, (8) fragile states, in particular, continue to be vulnerable to potential inroads by Al-Qaida and are of concern in terms of local and international security and stability, and (9) U.S. policies affecting the shape of the end-state in theaters such as Iraq and Afghanistan raise uncertainties as to the potential for exploitation by Al-Qaida.

“... Several conclusions and implications can be drawn [from the preceding analysis]. First, Al-Qaida plans for and fights war in a rational and methodical way, with realpolitik considerations key to decision making. Second, Al-Qaida's ideologically inspired strategic objectives may be unrealistic and overambitious, and they simply cannot be supported at the operational level, given the existing balance of power in the world. Third, any operational plans can only be as good as the assumptions on which they are based and the ability to execute them. One can question many of Al-Qaida's key assumptions, based on doubtful analysis, as well as the policy choices which have often been beyond Al-Qaida's capability to implement. Of course, one can point to numerous resulting blunders on the ground for Al-Qaida. Fourth, Al-Qaida's military strategy is likely to continue to support enduring long-range goals along the same lines, with a dual emphasis on insurgencies and out-of-area strikes. . . **From the article, *Al-Qaida's Theater Strategy***

REGULAR FEATURES:

The Most Popular Downloads

FROM THE MCCLL WEBSITE

Many of the documents highlighted in MCCLL monthly newsletters and weekly new data rollups are downloaded every month from the MCCLL NIPR and SIPR websites. These include MCCLL reports, Marine Corps unit after action reports (AARs), recent doctrinal publications, briefings on a wide range of topics, and many other source documents that articulate valuable lessons learned. In an effort to inform readers concerning the products that other Marines, civilian Marines, and contractors have found of interest, we include in each monthly newsletter a list of documents that have been accessed and downloaded most often during the previous month.

During December 2012, the documents listed in the table to the right were most frequently accessed. This diverse

collection of documents includes three MCCLL reports (including one of the latest ***Trends Reports***), one recent unit AAR, two of the latest Current Operations Briefings from HQMC, a recent Current News Playbook from the HQMC Division of Public Affairs, a report on the Muslim Brotherhood from the Civil-Military Fusion Centre (CFC), and an IED lexicon from the Defense Intelligence Agency (DIA)/Joint IED Defeat Organization (JIEDDO).

These documents were downloaded most often by officers from 2ndLt to LtCol, SNCOs (SSgt and MSgt/1stSgt), DoD civilians in grades GS-111 and GS-13, and DoD contractors.

There also continue to be significant numbers of new registrations on the MCCLL website each month, with 411 new registrants signing up in December, compared with 688 in November.

Photo credit: SSgt Lyndel Johnson

Marines from 3d Reconnaissance Battalion conduct parachute training during Exercise BALIKATAN 2012 in the Republic of the Philippines. The battalion's [***after action report***](#), with lessons and observations concerning parachute operations during training in Alaska, was one of the most frequently downloaded documents during December 2012.



TOP TEN DOWNLOADS FROM THE MCCLL WEBSITE, DECEMBER 2012

1. [*Expeditionary Energy in Afghanistan*](#) (MCCLL)
2. [*The Muslim Brotherhood*](#) (Civil-Military Fusion Centre)
3. [*Parachute Operations 12-12 After Action Report*](#) (3d Reconnaissance Battalion)
4. [*Current Operations Briefing, 6 December 2012*](#) (HQMC)
5. [*Current Operations Briefing, 29 November 2012*](#) (HQMC)
6. [*Al-Qaida After Ten Years of War*](#) (Marine Corps University)
7. [*Maritime Exercise RIM OF THE PACIFIC \(RIMPAC\) 2012*](#) (MCCLL)
8. [*Command Element Trends, 1 April to 30 September 2012*](#) (MCCLL)
9. [*Current News Playbook, 29 November 2012*](#) (HQMC Division of Public Affairs)
10. [*Weapons Technical Intelligence \(WTI\) Improvised Explosive Device \(IED\) Lexicon*](#) (Defense Intelligence Agency/Joint IED Defeat Organization)

♦ Briefly ♦

UPDATED MULTI-SERVICE TACTICS, TECHNIQUES AND PROCEDURES FOR THE JOINT APPLICATION OF FIREPOWER

On 11 December 2012, the Air Land Sea Application (ALSA) Center released an updated version of its Multi-Service Tactics, Techniques, and Procedures (MTTP) publication on the topic of the [Joint Application of Firepower \(JFIRE\)](http://www.alsa.mil/library/mttps/jfire.htm). This document is designed to be a pocket-sized, quick reference guide for requesting fire support in accordance with approved joint TTPs. The document can be accessed from the ALSA website at: <http://www.alsa.mil/library/mttps/jfire.htm>. This document, along with other MTTP publications, has been developed by ALSA in accordance with a memorandum of agreement between the doctrine commanders of the U.S. Army, Marine Corps, Navy and Air Force that calls for the development of publications that will meet the immediate needs of the warfighter.

In particular, the JFIRE publication identifies MTTPs for calls for fire, provides formats for joint air strike requests, furnishes procedures for close air support (CAS) coordination and planning, identifies the communications architecture for joint fires, and incorporates data on relevant weapons systems. The publication applies to the tactical and special operations forces of each of the military services. Although it is a U.S.-only document, it incorporates selected North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) formats, as appropriate. The document is designed to be used primarily by battalion and squadron-level combat units.

Photo credit: Cpl Ned Johnson

In order to ensure that simulated targets are accurately targeted, a joint fires observer with the Personal Security Detail, Regimental Combat Team 7 (RCT-7), employs a Portable Lightweight Designator/Rangefinder during an Enhanced Mojave Viper 7-12 fire support coordination exercise.



DEVELOPING A GREATER UNDERSTANDING OF THE AFRICAN CONTINENT: REPORTS FROM THE CIVIL-MILITARY FUSION CENTRE

Among recent publications of the Civil-Military Fusion Centre (CFC) of the NATO Allied Command Transformation are four reports that address various aspects of potential instability on the African continent. With the Marine Corps heavily involved in conducting theater security assistance activities in Africa, these unclassified, publicly releasable reports should provide Marines with background information on some of the issues being faced by the military forces they are helping to train.

- **[Al-Qaida and the African Arc of Instability](#)**. This CFC report addresses the growing role of Al-Qaida across northern Africa, as well as its links with militant groups in Nigeria, Mali, Somalia and Yemen. The report highlights the fact that insurgents are able to thrive in areas in which there is a "power vacuum," especially when there is also access to large numbers of weapons (such as is the case in Libya, Mali and Syria). In northern Africa, militant extremists have taken advantage of recent upheavals to expand their influence and create an "arc of instability" that stretches from the coast of West Africa across the Sahel region into the Horn of Africa. (Readers should also refer to the [previous article in this newsletter](#) on the Marine Corps University conference report that addresses ***Al-Qaida After Ten Years of War***, which includes an extensive discussion of Al-Qaida and its affiliates on the African continent.)
- **[Drug Trafficking in Africa](#)**. This report provides an overview of the illicit drug trafficking trade reported in African nations. It examines the production and smuggling of cocaine, cannabis, heroin, and amphetamine-type stimulants, the activities of the associated organized crime networks, the impact of the drug market on security, and the linkages between the drug trade and terrorism. The report points out that, although the trans-Saharan trade routes have existed for centuries connecting African countries to markets in Europe and across northern Africa, the routes have been used increasingly during the past few decades to traffic drugs, people and illicit goods into Europe. The high numbers of drug seizures reported by the United Nations Office of Drugs and Crime (UNODC) highlight the porous borders, weak control measures, and strategic location of this increasingly active regional hub for the drug trade.
- **[The Muslim Brotherhood: An Historical Perspective on Current Events](#)**. Last month's **[MCCLL newsletter](#)**

highlighted the **November 2012 Edition of "Insights"** from the Middle East Studies department of Marine Corps University that included an article on the current political situation in Egypt and the popular mandate received by the Muslim Brotherhood during the most recent elections. This CFC report addresses the same topic, providing a history of the organization and recent developments in Egypt that have made it the most powerful political force in the country. The Muslim Brotherhood has now evolved into a loosely-affiliated global movement that is influencing generations of Muslim activists in their goal of spreading Islam throughout the world.

- **The Impact of Gender and Land Rights on Food Security in the Horn of Africa**. This report summarizes the impact of land rights, as well as access to markets and education, on gender equality and food security in the region. These issues undermine the ability of women to make decisions, as well as posing obstacles to food security. Recent reforms in Ethiopia and Kenya are also highlighted.

THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE U.S. MILITARY'S INFORMATION OPERATIONS CAMPAIGNS IN AFGHANISTAN

In response to the findings of a **RAND Corporation Study** that addressed U.S. military information operations (IO) campaigns in Afghanistan from 2001 to 2010, the Defence Academy of the United Kingdom (DAUK) has prepared a paper that provides a counter-argument to some of the recommendations developed by the RAND study team for improving future IO campaigns. The authors of the DAUK paper, entitled **The Effectiveness of U.S. Military Information Operations in Afghanistan 2001 - 2010: Why RAND Missed the Point**, agree with key lessons from the RAND report, but disagree with some of the major recommendations.

The RAND report determined that "if the overall IO mission in Afghanistan is defined as convincing most residents of contested areas to side decisively with the Afghan government and its foreign allies against the Taliban insurgency, this has not been achieved." The RAND paper concludes that this failure resulted from the inability to counter Taliban propaganda effectively, inadequate coordination between IO and psychological operations (PsyOps) activities, long response times involved in the approval process, the lack of IO and PsyOps integration in operational planning, the absence of measures of effectiveness (MOEs), and a poor target audience analysis (TAA).

Although the DAUK paper agrees with the basic conclusion stated above, the paper indicates that the ineffectiveness of IO stemmed from an even more fundamental issue, "a corporate failure to adapt IO and PsyOps to the 21st century, instead relying upon ages-old methods of communications, now proven moribund. If there is one single area more than any other in which this is obvious, it is in the over reliance of IO and PsyOps on commercial advertising and marketing strategies . . ." In the context of the article, these strategies considered that NATO and the Government of the Islamic Republic of Afghanistan (GIROA) were the "products" to be sold, with the Afghan people constituting the "consumers."

The report points out that coalition forces failed to understand the importance of "behavioural communications" that focus on mitigating or encouraging specific pre-determined behaviours (e.g., efforts that directly targeted the trafficking of drugs or that boosted retention within the Afghan National Army). "In any conflict environment, it is the behaviours of different groups that determine outcomes, yet the International Security Assistance Force (ISAF) has pursued "attitudinal" change at the cost of behavioural change. It is rare, for instance, to hear senior officers talk of behaviours, but exceptionally common to hear discussion of perceptions. . . It would be meagre satisfaction if opinion polls indicated that support for ISAF was buoyant, and yet there was no evidence of that support on the ground. Taking a behavioural approach to communications will lead the way to identifying which behaviours are most indicative of "support," and what we can do to encourage them. . ."

Photo credit: LCpl Robert Reeves

U.S. soldiers from the Regional Psychological Support Element (PPSE) of Regional Command Southwest (RC (SW)) drop pamphlets from an MV-22B Osprey to communicate a message of conversion and reintegration to the local Afghan citizens of Helmand Province.



Reading Lists and Book Reviews

In July 2011, the [Commandant's Professional Reading List](#) was revised by a review panel established by General James F. Amos to ensure that the list continues to be relevant and provides Marines with a variety of resources to broaden their perspectives and help ensure that they benefit from the experiences of others. The list continues to highlight ***First to Fight: An Inside View of the U.S. Marine Corps*** by LtGen Victor H. Krulak, USMC (Ret), as the Commandant's "choice book" to be read by all Marines. In May 2012, two additional books were added to the reading list, ***The Marines of Montford Point*** by Melton A. McLaurin and ***Into the Tiger's Jaw*** by LtGen Frank E. Petersen. Marines are tasked to read a minimum of one book from the list for their grade each year. The CMC list, as well as other reading lists (such as those prepared by I Marine Expeditionary Force (I MEF) and the Director of Intelligence), are highlighted on the [Marine Corps University \(MCU\) website](#), along with discussion guides and other resources.

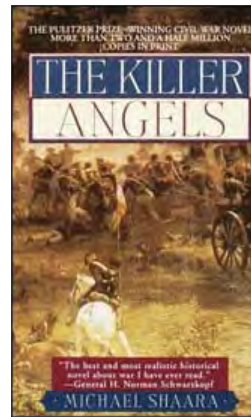
This month we feature three books:

- **The Killer Angels** by Michael Shaara, on the Commandant's list for Sergeant,
- **Brute: The Life of Victor Krulak** by Robert Coram, on the Commandant's list for Lieutenant Colonel, and
- **Find, Fix, Finish** by Aki Peritz and Eric Rosenbach, a new book on the counter-terrorism campaigns that resulted in the death of bin Laden and devastation of Al-Qaida.

THE KILLER ANGELS: THE CLASSIC NOVEL OF THE CIVIL WAR

MICHAEL SHARA (RANDOM HOUSE PUBLISHING GROUP, 2003)

Michael Shaara's Pulitzer Prize winning historical novel, ***The Killer Angels***, has been hailed by Civil War historians such as James McPherson as, "a superb recreation of the battle of Gettysburg" for providing insight into what the "war was about, and what it meant." . . . Shaara, a science fiction novelist turned historical novelist, includes a note to the reader prior to his foreword explaining how he approached his work, perhaps to put historians' minds at ease. Shaara states, "this is the story of the Battle of Gettysburg, told from the viewpoints of Robert E. Lee and James Longstreet and some of the other men who fought there." He continues, "There have been many versions of that battle and that war. I have therefore avoided historical opinions and gone back primarily to the words



of the men themselves, their letters and other documents. I have not consciously changed any fact." Shaara's note to the reader and the fact that he spent seven years researching and revising the book following a family vacation to Gettysburg proves the motivation Shaara had to write a fact-based historical novel worthy of praise. Despite its critics, Shaara's novel won a Pulitzer Prize and was the inspiration for Ronald F. Maxwell's film adaptation, ***Gettysburg***; both are

currently used in classrooms across the world.

Shaara's foreword is a valuable teaching tool which contains brief biographies of the armies and men who fought at Gettysburg. He provides an overview of the armies' conditions prior to their collision at the then little-known town of Gettysburg. Shaara analyzes the Army of Northern Virginia under the generalship of Robert E. Lee by exclaiming, "They are rebels and volunteers. They are mostly unpaid and usually self-equipped. This is an army of remarkable unity, fighting for disunion. It is Anglo-Saxon and Protestant. Though there are many men who cannot read or write, they all speak English. They share common customs and a common faith and they have been consistently victorious against superior numbers." Shaara masterfully summarized the character of the Army of Northern Virginia and its inherent hypocrisy. An army "remarkably" unified by race and religion fighting "remarkably" for disunion. Shaara's assessment of the Army of the Potomac is equally masterful as he juxtaposed them with the Army of Northern Virginia. Shaara wrote, "It is a strange new kind of army, a polyglot mass of vastly dissimilar men, fighting for union. There are strange accents and strange religions and many who do not speak English at all. Nothing like this army has been seen upon the planet. It is a collection of men from many different places who have seen much defeat and many different commanders." Shaara's juxtaposition and analysis of the Army of Northern Virginia and the Army of the Potomac is an excellent summary of these two armies. . . One may ask why the Army of Northern Virginia was united as an Anglo-Saxon, English speaking force, determined to preserve its way of life, while also entertaining why the Army of the Potomac was so diverse in its ethnicity, language, and religious traditions. Hopefully these descriptions provide a springboard from which a larger discussion can be had over the differences between the industrial urban North and the agricultural South. Shaara's forward contains useful biographies of the commanding officers who fought at Gettysburg. . . These biographies contain pertinent information including basic background information, whether

the soldier fought for the Union or the Confederacy, military rank, and interesting anecdotes. Some anecdotal information includes Robert E. Lee's battle with heart disease, James Longstreet's belief in defensive warfare, and Joshua Lawrence Chamberlain's background as a professor of rhetoric at Bowdoin College. Shaara also includes the biographies of generals who he believed helped shape the ultimate outcome of the battle such as John Buford, for choosing to defend "good ground," and J.E.B. Stuart, who failed to provide Robert E. Lee with information about the Union's positions around Gettysburg. . .

Shaara's novel is divided into four parts accompanied by many maps of important events that took place at Gettysburg. The four parts are titled after the days that the battle of Gettysburg took place between Monday, June 29, 1863, and Friday, July 3, 1863. The four parts are further subdivided according to the commanding officers who played major roles on each specific day. Here, Shaara analyzes the unsung heroes of the battle of Gettysburg . . . Key events and decisions are covered in great detail including Major General John Buford's decision to dismount his cavalry and defend the town of Gettysburg on July, 1, 1863, while waiting for John Reynolds' infantry division for reinforcement. Reynolds is killed and Buford dies later due to the injuries he suffered that day. According to Shaara, Buford never received "*recognition for choosing the ground and holding it*" and that in doing so he possibly saved "*not only the battle but perhaps the war.*" Buford's decision prevented the Confederates from seizing the high ground overlooking the town of Gettysburg, high ground that played a pivotal role on July, 3, 1863, when Union artillery decimated Pickett's charge. Shaara's acknowledgement of unsung heroes such as Buford is a welcome addition to his novel . . .

Shaara also does an excellent job revealing the errors Robert E. Lee and other Confederate generals made at Gettysburg . . . Even though many people defend Lee today, Shaara does not shy away from exposing Lee's tactical blunders. . .

READ THE COMPLETE REVIEW BY

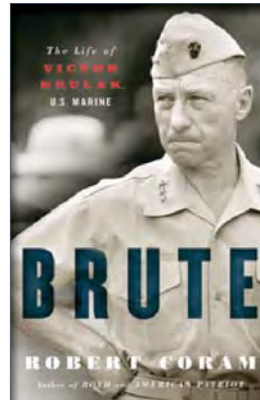
MICHAEL A. MOLINARI

TEACHING AMERICAN HISTORY ONLINE

BRUTE: THE LIFE OF VICTOR KRULAK, U.S. MARINE

ROBERT CORAM (LITTLE, BROWN & COMPANY, 2010)

When the legendary Marine Corps Lieutenant General Victor Krulak was a boy, his father, a jeweler, gave him two pieces of advice. The first was: "Nobody ever learned a bad habit from a horse." The second: "You will be short, and you will be bald. But you don't have to be fat."



LtGen Krulak took both lessons to heart. He became a skilled bareback rider. And although he was a mere 5 feet, 4 inches, and 116 pounds in November 1933, his final year at Annapolis, so small and light he needed a waiver to become a commissioned Marine, he was fanatical for the rest of his life about being fighting trim. (He never quite went bald.)

Fighting is the operative word.

LtGen Krulak was equal parts Patton, Popeye, Rahm Emanuel and the Great Santini; he packed the snorting personality and irritable drive of ten men into his tiny, squirming physique. The nickname "Brute," first applied ironically, came to fit him perfectly. As one awed soldier put it, "That is the biggest little man I have ever seen."

The military historian Robert Coram captures LtGen Krulak's striding march across the Marine Corps, and across the American century, in ***Brute: The Life of Victor Krulak, U.S. Marine***. It's a work of popular military history that is at times ragged and hectoring, but always plainspoken and absorbing.

LtGen Krulak's is not a simple story to tell. During his long career with the Marines, he didn't accomplish one great thing but played a signal role in many, many great things. He was a man who made his superiors look good. He was the Corps' fox, not its hedgehog.

He was posted to Shanghai as an intelligence officer during the Japanese incursions of the 1930s, and during World War II, he led a battalion on a daring raid in the Solomon Islands, though his soldiers were vastly outnumbered. (Some of the men were rescued in a PT boat skippered by John F. Kennedy.) He was a mastermind of the Okinawa invasion.

LtGen Krulak's mind was as fit and wiry as his body. He was a driving force behind the development and adoption of the drop-bow Higgins boat, used for amphibian landings, a boat that General Dwight D. Eisenhower said "won the war for us." He was a pioneer in the use of helicopters, seizing on their potential as early as the 1940s and putting them to use in Korea. He advised Presidents Kennedy and Johnson on Vietnam. He was repeatedly involved in rescuing the Marine Corps from government plans to disband or weaken it.

LtGen Krulak seemed to be everywhere. He was one of those men who simply slept less, and wanted more, than others did. He was so fearful of not being tall enough to join the Marines that — as one famous story about him goes — he

had a friend whack him on the head with a piece of lumber so that the resulting lump would enable him to meet the height requirement.

Mr. Coram, whose previous books include *Boyd: The Fighter Pilot Who Changed the Art of War* (2002), is a meticulous investigator of the things that drove Brute Krulak, not all of them pretty. He was “a haunted and driven man,” Mr. Coram writes, “possessed of a psyche filled with spiders and snakes.”

LtGen Krulak’s parents were Russian Jews. He lied about this heritage, claiming he was raised an Episcopalian. Perhaps he was only attending to reality. At the time, the author points out, the Marine Corps was “a veritable witches’ brew of racism and discrimination.” But LtGen Krulak went further than he had to, essentially disavowing his parents and family back home in Denver for the rest of his life. He never spoke of an early marriage that ended in divorce. He was a remote and sometimes brutal father to his three sons. (One of them, Charles C. Krulak, would advance even further than his father, serving as 31st Commandant of the Marine Corps from 1995 to 1999.) LtGen Krulak was also a fabulist, often exaggerating his exploits or making them up out of whole cloth, something that, given his proven record of bravery, was utterly unnecessary.

Napoleon Complex? Perhaps. Either way, *Brute* has a sense of humor about LtGen Krulak’s height that he himself did not. LtGen Krulak once called a Marine photographer into his office, climbed on a chair and said, “*This is how tall I am going to be in every picture you take of me.*” Later, another officer translated this order for the photographer: “*It means you dig a hole and get in it before you take a picture of the general.*”

Brute has its stagnant moments, especially when detailing General Krulak’s time as a Washington adviser. Mr. Coram interrupts his narrative’s flow too often to explain what he is about to explain. He is so enthralled in what he sees as a superior Marine culture that *Brute* will surely antagonize members of the other services. And he takes broad swipes at many of the best-known Vietnam-era journalists, including David Halberstam of The New York Times, who sometimes wrote critically of LtGen Krulak and Marines.

Brute captures its subject, however, in strokes that are sharp, simple and often funny. LtGen Krulak loved to give large, formal parties, and was famous for knocking men over with his recipe for fish house punch. Mr. Coram describes its subtle effects this way: “*Fish House Punch is an insidious drink that, after two glasses, causes a peculiar numbness around the ears. After three glasses, a man believes he is the smartest*

person God ever created. Then comes the moment when he thinks bugs are crawling all over his body.”

Brute Krulak made his share of enemies. Some officers resigned rather than serve under him. He adhered, Mr. Coram writes, to the French military expression “*De l’audace, encore de l’audace, et toujours de l’audace*” (“Audacity, more audacity, and audacity forever”). The sign on his office wall read: “*The Harder I Work, the Luckier I Get.*” On the field, his men loved him. One Marine who fought under General Krulak says here, “*We would have followed him to hell.*”

READ THE COMPLETE REVIEW BY

DWIGHT GARNER

THE NEW YORK TIMES ONLINE

FIND, FIX, FINISH: INSIDE THE COUNTER-TERRORISM CAMPAIGNS THAT KILLED BIN LADEN AND DEVASTATED AL QAEDA

AKI PERITZ AND ERIC ROSENBACK (PUBLIC AFFAIRS, 2012)

The following article on the same topic as their book appeared in the 2nd Quarter 2011 edition of the *Joint Force Quarterly (JFQ) Journal* from National Defense University Press: *The New Find-Fix-Finish Doctrine* by Eric Rosenback and Aki Peritz:

It was a crisp and clear morning on August 5, 2009, the last day of Baitullah Mehsud’s life. The grimly efficient leader of Tehrik-e-Taliban Pakistan (TTP)—more commonly known as the Pakistani Taliban—was responsible for Prime Minister Benazir Bhutto’s assassination and dozens of gruesome suicide attacks in both Afghanistan and Pakistan. On that particular day, Mehsud was not planning attacks but was instead lounging on the roof of a house in South Waziristan when two Hellfire missiles launched from an unmanned aerial vehicle (UAV) incinerated him and his wife. Two days prior, Central Intelligence Agency (CIA)

officials stationed some 7,000 miles away in suburban Washington had identified Mehsud in Predator drone surveillance footage and ordered the lethal strike. After the dust settled, the live video feed showed that Mehsud was sliced in half by the strike and was unquestionably killed. A week later, President Barack Obama reported that “we took out” Mehsud, confirming it was indeed the United



States that felled the Taliban commander.

In contrast to the many sanitized Hollywood storylines of American officials ordering efficient strikes against dastardly terrorists, eliminating Mehsud was a lengthy, messy process of lethal trial and error for the U.S. Government. The Washington Post called finding Mehsud an “obsession” for CIA officers; this was the sixteenth drone strike that the agency, with explicit White House approval, had executed attempting to neutralize him. In this high-stakes game of whack-a-mole with one of Pakistan’s most dangerous militants, the United States had killed an estimated 200 other individuals—militants and noncombatants alike—since 2008. Not trusting just one method, U.S. officials began taking a parallel approach in early 2009, advertising a \$5 million bounty for information leading to Mehsud’s death or capture—a sum that subsequent to the August strike might have been collected by unknown individuals.

The U.S. demonstrated not only the capacity to hunt individuals in the remote badlands of Pakistan but also that it could execute the hunt without committing ground forces to the area. The strikes further illustrated U.S. willingness to allocate resources—in this case, 18 months, multiple airstrikes, significant analytical and operational capital, and countless personnel hours—to finding and killing one man.

The U.S. adapted and learned from this experience. The tenure of the next TTP head, Hakimullah Mehsud, lasted less than five months, his time cut short by another UAV strike. More importantly, the drone strike that incapacitated Hakimullah occurred only five days after a video surfaced on al Jazeera television showing the new TTP leader sitting beside a Jordanian militant who had just killed eight CIA officers in a suicide bombing in Khost, Afghanistan. The quick turnaround time from the video’s emergence to Hakimullah’s neutralization sent a clear message: the United States was rapidly perfecting its capability to eliminate those who seek to harm America.

Such a national security capability did not exist a decade before, yet it now stands as a core component of the strategy that the Nation leverages to defeat its adversaries. Some of this capability was born from extensive experience gained by intelligence personnel and U.S. special operators in Iraq and

Afghanistan. The recipe for success represents a new doctrine for national security based on dramatically improved drone technology, close cooperation both within civilian and military organizations and with host-nation intelligence services, lethal operators, and a modern interpretation of the law of war that allows for the targeting of militants.

The 9/11 attacks radically shifted policymaker attitudes about using the tools necessary to protect the Nation from the protean threat of international terrorism. The attacks on that Tuesday morning were indeed the catalyst for a radical restructuring of America’s attitudes toward security and stability . . .

READ THE COMPLETE ARTICLE BY

ERIC ROSENBACH AND AKI PERITZ

JOINT FORCE QUARTERLY (JFQ) JOURNAL ONLINE

MCCLL Products “in the Pipeline”

The results of a number of recently completed, ongoing and planned collection efforts are scheduled to be documented in MCCLL reports within the next few months. “Stay tuned” for these MCCLL products:

- **Air Operations in Support of Logistics**
- **Afghanistan Redeployment, Retrograde, Reset and Reconstitution (R4) Operations**
- **Security Force Assistance in OEF**
- **Marine Corps Forces, Pacific (MARFORPAC) Theater Security Cooperation (TSC) Exercises**
- **Virtual Support to the Marine Air Ground Task Force: Intelligence Reach-Back to I Marine Expeditionary Force**
- **The Combat Logistics Regiment/Combat Logistics Battalion Transition in OEF**
- **Ground Combat Element (GCE) Unit Deployment Program (UDP) and Marine Rotational Force - Darwin: 2d Battalion, 3d Marines (2/3)**
- **Exercise DAWN BLITZ 2013**

The Marine Corps Center for Lessons Learned (MCCLL) newsletter provides “initial impressions” summaries that identify key observations and potential lessons from collection efforts. These observations highlight potential shortfalls, risks or issues experienced by units that may suggest a need for change. The observations are not service level decisions. In addition, some information in this newsletter has been compiled from publicly available sources and is not official USMC policy. Although the information has been gathered from reliable sources, the currency and completeness of the information is subject to change and cannot be guaranteed.

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Contact information for Marine Corps Center for Lessons Learned (MCCLL) representatives at major Marine Corps and joint commands and organizations is provided below. In many cases, both commercial telephone numbers and Defense Switched Network (DSN) numbers are provided.

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